

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE TECHNICIAN (AVIAN INFLUENZA)
GS-404-03/04/05

SJ 415
(April 2006)

INTRODUCTION

This position is located within the Wildlife Services program of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The assignment involves the performance of duties relating to wildlife damage management and avian influenza surveillance in wildlife. Use of capture techniques aimed specifically at migratory birds, managing wildlife damage, and conducting wildlife disease surveillance is incumbent upon this position. The position requires working collaboratively with other technicians and biologists in the program and from the State Wildlife Agency, Universities, Federal and State partners, and non-governmental organizations. The work is primarily concerned with WS operations relating to the capture of migratory birds, subsequent wildlife disease sampling, proper sample packaging and shipping, and data management.

DUTIES

Serves as a member of the WS workforce engaged in wildlife disease surveillance.

Incumbent will be required to collect biological samples from birds and the environment.

Follow instructions in wildlife disease (avian influenza) surveillance plans as directed by Supervisor.

Incumbent will be required to accurately identify migratory birds based on sight, call, or other indication.

Must be able to correctly identify current, and forecast future, migratory bird movements to plan capture and sampling efforts.

Incumbent will be required to be familiar with and know how to use various devices, chemicals, tools, bird traps and nets, firearms and related equipment utilized in humanely capturing wildlife.

Must be highly skilled in the use of various WS control methods and procedures including the use of firearms and various avian traps. Wildlife damage management methods utilized may include the use of cage traps, hand nets, walk in funnel traps, mist nets and other stationary nets, rocket and cannon nets, alpha-chloralose, and shooting.

Must be able to discuss Endangered Species concepts, and be familiar with the ranges of the various threatened and endangered species that might come in conflict with any phase of WS programs.

Responsible for, and may instruct others in, the maintenance, repair and safekeeping of tools,

supplies and equipment issued. When using registered pesticides, investigational new animal drugs, or controlled substances, must maintain records pursuant to the State Pesticide statutes, Drug Enforcement Agency and Board of Pharmacy statutes and Environmental Protection Agency pesticide use restriction.

Incumbent may be required to serve as an instructor and conduct demonstrations and training for cooperators or other interested groups on WS control methods, procedures, and program objectives. This may include preliminary instruction and training of new personnel on WS equipment, sampling techniques, sample packaging and shipping, devices, chemicals, firearms, etc., reporting procedures, field responsibilities and other technical aspects of the program.

Prepares and submits routine and special reports regarding daily, weekly or monthly activities, observations, events and other relevant data collected.

Will be required to pass Restricted Use Pesticide Applicator examination, as required of persons who use restricted-use pesticides within 90 days of appointment.

Must demonstrate a respect for safety in all operations, including the operation of motor vehicles, firearms, rocket nets, chemical methods, control devices, and equipment.

Must have a valid State Motor Vehicle Operator's or Commercial License, as appropriate. Operation of Government-owned or leased vehicles is required.

FACTORS

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Knowledge of basic wildlife diseases and the potential impacts to animal agriculture, natural resources, and public health.

Knowledge of the habits, characteristics and habitats occupied by a wide variety of avian species that are, or may become, of interest in avian influenza surveillance in wild birds.

Knowledge of, and the ability to interpret and apply, local, State and Federal policies, regulations, laws and ordinances that affect not only wildlife damage management procedures but also other wildlife species that are usually beneficial.

Knowledge of wildlife damage management techniques and wildlife disease sampling approaches to carry out a full range of common technical duties.

Knowledge of the principles of biological sciences, technical methods and procedures of assigned tasks.

Knowledge of toxic material application procedures. Incumbent may be required to complete

appropriate Certified Applicators examination, as required by Federal and/or State laws.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

The incumbent works under the general supervision of the District Supervisor or State Director. Incumbent is given considerable latitude in carrying out delegated responsibilities and is expected to exercise individual initiative and independent judgment determining courses of action, work priorities or operational needs. The supervisor may be located a considerable distance and time away from work locations and may not always immediately be available for consultation. Work is reviewed primarily through personal visits, consultations, accomplishments met, reports and records. Controversial items, highly sensitive issues or critical problems which may have a detrimental impact on WS operations will be reported and discussed with the supervisor.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines include a variety of local, State and Federal laws, regulations or ordinances regarding wildlife damage management activities and wildlife disease sampling. Judgment is required in the selection and adaptation of appropriate guideline for each situation encountered by the incumbent.

COMPLEXITY

The work involves the performance of a broad range of duties relating to the use of control techniques, including the handling of toxic materials aimed at managing wildlife damage, and collection of high quality biological specimens for disease analysis.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

The purpose of the work is to provide assistance in collecting biological specimens from wildlife. The incumbent's work is critical to the overall effectiveness of the WS program and avian influenza surveillance activities.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts are with members of the general public, including citizen groups and non-governmental organizations, associations, farmers, ranchers, public land managers and various local, State and Federal agencies. Contacts may also include individuals who do not understand or support the WS program.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

The purpose of contacts is to cooperate in sample collection activities, provide technical assistance in operational control and to promote the WS program and its accomplishments.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Work requires physical exertion such as walking over rough, uneven or rocky surfaces, bending, crouching, stooping and stretching. Agility and dexterity are required.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Incumbent spends a considerable amount of time outdoors. The terrain may be uneven, rocky or in vegetation. Work locations may be remote. There may be exposure to extremes of weather and temperature. The incumbent may be exposed to toxic chemicals.